

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Response, claims 1-3 and 5-9 are pending, of which claim 1 is independent. Claim 4 is canceled. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 4. Support for further amendments to claim 1 can be found at least at page 11, lines 3-12 of the present application. No new matter is added. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims define over the art of record.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3 and 8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Application Publication No. JP 11-062631 to Sano et al. (hereafter “Sano”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,522,416 to Farrell et al. (hereafter “Farrell”).

Claims 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Sano reference, in view of the Farrell reference, and further in view of Canadian Patent No. 2,261,243 to Dell et al. (hereafter “Dell”).

Applicants respectfully submit that the Sano, Farrell and Dell references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest *a sealing member disposed between the bearing and the opening, wherein the sealing member comprises a first lip inclined away from the opening and a second lip inclined toward the opening*, as recited in amended claim 1.

The Examiner correctly indicates that the Sano and Farrell references do not teach a sealing member disposed between the bearing and the opening of the regulator. The Examiner cites the Dell reference for the teaching of a sealing member. However, the Dell reference, alone or in any reasonable combination with the Sato and Farrell references, does not teach or suggest that a seal member with a first lip and a second lip that is disposed between the bearing and the opening.

The sections of the Dell reference cited by the Examiner as teaching a seal member merely teaches an O-ring that is provided around the entire pressure regulating element (62). Specifically, the Dell reference recites that the pressure regulator element (62) has a cylindrical portion (74) which is *received within* an O-ring *retainer* (80). See Dell reference, page 4, lines

23-24 and Figure 4. In contrast, the present application recites a sealing member provided *within* the pressure regulator *between the bearing* supporting the rotational shaft of the pressure regulator *and the opening* for passing oxidizing agent.

The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include a sealing member between the bearing of the regulator and the rotational shaft of the regulator. Applicants respectfully disagree. One of skill in the art applying the seal construct of the Dell reference would be motivated to provide an O-ring retainer *around* the pressure regulator, as opposed to *between the bearing* supporting the rotational shaft of the pressure regulator *and the opening* for passing oxidizing agent, as recited in Applicants' claim 1.

Moreover, amended claim 1 recites that the sealing member comprises *a first lip inclined away from the opening and a second lip inclined toward the opening*. The Dell reference is silent about this feature. As recited in the present application, the first lip and the second lip are effective in reliably preventing a gas from leaking from the opening into the regulator body, and impurities, e.g. lubricating grease on the bearings, from entering from the regulator body into the opening. *See Present Application*, page 11, lines 7-12.

The Farrell reference, the Dell reference and the Sano reference, alone or in any reasonable combination, do not teach or the suggest *a sealing member disposed between the bearing and the opening, wherein the sealing member comprises a first lip inclined away from the opening and a second lip inclined toward the opening*, as recited in claim 1. Thus, the cited references fail to teach or suggest each and every element of claim 1.

Claims 2, 3 and 5-9 depend from claim 1 and, as such, incorporate each and every element of claim 1. In light of the arguments presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-3 and 5-9 define over the Sano, Farrell and Dell references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1-3 and 5-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Please charge any shortage or credit any overpayment of fees to our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. TOWK-015RCE. In the event that a petition for an extension of time is required to be submitted herewith, and the requisite petition does not accompany this response, the undersigned hereby petitions under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) for an extension of time for as many months as are required to render this submission timely. Any fee due is authorized to be charged to the aforementioned Deposit Account.

Dated: February 13, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

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